DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 064 HE 036 360

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Birnbaum, Robert |
| TITLE | The End of Shared Governance: Looking ahead or Looking back. |
| PUB DATE | 2002-00-00 |
| NOTE | 32p.; Prepared by the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (Los Angeles, CA). |
| PUB TYPE | Opinion Papers (120) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *College Faculty; *Efficiency; *Governance; *Higher Education; *Institutional Mission; *Teacher Role |

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that governance and institutional purpose are related, and that proposals to make governance more efficient by reducing or limiting the faculty role in shared governance are more likely to diminish institutional effectiveness. The rationalization of governance would not only reduce faculty trust and cooperation, delegitimize the governance process, and weaken internal processes of social regulation, it would also alter the missions of academic institutions. These institutions are best served by backward looking processes rooted in culture than by forward-looking processes based on rational choice. (Contains 41 references.) (Author/SLD)

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ED 482 064

# THE END OF SHARED GOVERNANCE: LOOKING AHEAD OR LOOKING BACK

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July 2003

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"Governance" is the term we give to the structures and processes that academic institutions invent to achieve an effective balance between the claims of two different, but equally valid, systems for organizational control and influence. One system, based on legal authority, is the basis for the role of trustees and administration; the other system, based on professional authority, justifies the role of the faculty. The importance of legal authority was recognized with the founding of our first colleges. The acceptance of the role of professional authority is a more recent phenomenon that has evolved over time.

The original argument for faculty participation emphasized only their competence to deal with strictly academic matters. President Henry P. Tappan of the University of Michigan, for example, proposed in 1858 that the faculty should enjoy sovereignty over teaching methods and the curriculum since scholars "are the only workmen who can build up universities" (Tappan, 1961, p. 519). This principle, while broadly recognized, was honored more in the breach than in the observance by many institutions for the next fifty years. But the increasing professionalism of the faculty during the early decades of the 20th century, accelerated by the academic revolution following World War Two, led at many institutions not only to faculty control over the curriculum but to a strong faculty voice in other education-related matters as well

The publication in 1967 of the canonical "Statement on government of colleges and universities" (American Association of University Professors, 2001), jointly formulated by three national associations[1] and therefore often referred to as the Joint Statement, for the first time formally articulated

[1] The Joint Statement was formally adopted by the American Association of University Professors, while committees of both the American Council on Education, and the Association of

and legitimated the faculty role in academic governance. Describing the essential relationship between trustees, presidents and faculty as based on "mutual understanding," "joint effort," and "inescapable interdependence," the Joint Statement laid out two basic principles of what has come to be known as "shared governance":

> (1) important areas of action involve at one time or another the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all the institutional components, and (2) difference in the weight of each voice, from one point to the next, should be determined by the reference to the responsibility of each component for the particular matter at hand....(p. 218).

Not only did the Joint Statement confirm the faculty's "primary responsibility" for educational matters such as faculty status, and programs of instruction and research, but it also articulated the importance of faculty involvement in educational policy more generally, including the setting of institutional objectives, planning, budgeting, and the selection of administrators.

The various systems for consultation and decision making created by individual institutions to operationalize the "shared" aspects of governance appear today to be working well, and are generally supported by both faculty and administrators (Cox, 2000). For example, senate chairs, academic vice presidents, and institutional presidents agree that campus senates operate efficiently and smoothly, consider important issues, and are believed to be associated with good communications and trust between institutional constituencies (Gilmour, 1991; Minor, 2003). Minor's study of four-year colleges and universities indicates that "shared governance remains a strong institutional value among all campus

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Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges "commended" it to their member organizations.

constituents" (p. 970). Nevertheless, there are increasing criticisms about the effectiveness of shared governance, and proposals for radical change. These proposals do not challenge the role of trustees and administrators; their latent, if not their manifest, purpose is to rationalize governance by reducing the involvement of the faculty in institutional decision making.

Current criticisms about academic governance focus attention on changes in the external environment, and claim that because of faculty obstructionism contemporary governance systems cannot respond appropriately. In the words of the 1998 statement on governance by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2001, p. 3), "Many governing boards, faculty members, and chief executives believe that internal governance arrangements have become so cumbersome that timely decisions are difficult to make, and small factions often are able to impede the decision-making process." Among AGB's recommended solutions are that boards should reiterate their ultimate responsibility and authority, explicitly clarify who has the right to make or participate in specific kinds of decisions, establish deadlines to speed up decisions, and clarify ambiguous or overlapping areas of stakeholder authority.

There are dire warnings of the consequences if governance reforms are not enacted. "Institutions ignore a changing environment at their peril," said the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. "Like dinosaurs, they risk becoming exhibits in a kind of cultural Jurassic Park: places of great interest and curiosity, increasingly irrelevant in a world that has passed them by" (Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Colleges, 1996). The dinosaur simile is evocative for anyone who has seen Fantasia, but perhaps should not be particularly distressing; after all, dinosaurs ruled the earth for over 150 million years and might be the rulers still (thus making moot the

problem of academic governance) but for an unpredictable and catastrophic asteroid impact.

Calls to revise governance systems to permit institutions to respond to the environment in a more timely fashion appear to accept two questionable assumptions; first, that today's colleges and universities have not been responsive enough, and second, that speed in making decisions is an asset in academic institutions.

The first assumption, that under existing governance arrangements institutions have not been responsive enough, is a puzzling one. Specific examples are seldom given and counterexamples are numerous. Institutions appear to be actively responding to environmental pressures by, for example, computerizing, raising external funds, establishing joint programs with industry, offering external degrees, and reducing full-time faculty. There are few if any emerging professions -- and indeed few if any vocational or technical areas -- that do not have academic programs dedicated to them. An alternative view, as Mingle (2000) has pointed out, is that "higher education, contrary to popular political belief, is in many ways extraordinarily responsive to the external environment -- especially when that external environment demands market-driven solutions and orientations." As a consequence, "in striking new ways, American colleges and universities no longer look or act much as they did 30, or even 20, years ago" (Eckel, 2003, p. 865).

The second assumption, related to the speed of institutional decision making, is also problematic. The effectiveness of normative institutions is not based on efficiency and speed but on reliability and trust, and any process that makes it possible to make good decisions more quickly also makes it possible to make bad decisions more quickly. Faculty involvement in shared governance processes may slow down the making of decisions, but it also assures more thorough discussion and

provides the institution with a sense of order and stability (Kerr, 1963). The greatest danger to higher education may be not that decisions are made too slowly because of the drag of consultation, but that they are made too swiftly and without regard for institutional core values. As Bok (2003, p. B9) has commented,

> The entrepreneurial university, it is said, must be able to move quickly. It cannot wait for windy faculty debates to run their course lest valuable opportunities be lost in he fast-moving corporate world in which we live. In fact, there is remarkably little evidence to support this view. Looking over the checkered history of commercial activity on campuses, one can much more easily point to examples of costly unilateral decisions by impatient administrators, such as ill-advised Internet ventures or grandiose athletic projects, than to valuable opportunities lost through inordinate faculty delays.

Bok's criticism suggests that the essential debate may not reflect differences about how a university should be governed, but rather conflicting ideologies and differences in belief about what a university should be. The complaints are not really about the inability to move quickly - - they are about the inability to quickly change a university into something else. This paper argues that governance and institutional purpose are related, and that proposals that suggest, either explicitly or implicitly, that the faculty role in shared governance should be reduced or limited is more likely to diminish rather than improve institutional effectiveness. Before presenting these arguments it is important to differentiate between two types of institutions, which I shall refer to as "academic" and "market," two separate aspects of governance, which I shall refer to as "hard" and "soft," and to posit a relationship between institutional type and governance emphasis.

"Academic" and "Market" institutions

Although the great diversity of colleges and universities is widely recognized, this appreciation has not been properly extended to an understanding of diversity in their governance. The culture, structure, programs, personnel and technology of different institutions all influence participant expectations of how decisions are to be made and influence is to be allocated. For that reason, conceptual discussions of the importance of "shared governance" are often fruitless unless the characteristics of the institutions being discussed are specified. In this paper I will oversimplify a multidimensional construct by suggesting that institutions can be placed on a continuum of purpose anchored by polar types that I shall refer to as academic and market They roughly correspond to the distinction that Gumport (2000b) has made between colleges and universities as social institutions or as an industry, and the conflict described by Enders (2002, p. 85) between "the university as the curiosity-driven institution in the cultural belief system, and as a service enterprise according to an utilitarian belief system."

Although all institutions of higher education have some admixture of academic and market elements, my comments about shared governance are meant to apply only to those institutions nearest the academic pole of the continuum which have norms and values that identify them as social institutions concerned with education primarily as an end, and not as a means. Shared governance may often be frustrating and exasperating, but I believe that is the most effective process through which academic institutions may achieve their indefinite goals, just as concepts such as consent of the governed, checks and balances, and the right of legitimate yet contending voices to participate makes democracy itself ungainly yet ultimately effective. To the extent institutions move away from the academic pole and

emphasize education as a means rather than as an end by offering products based on consumer demand, deviations from shared governance may potentially be useful.

At the market extreme of the academic/market continuum, for example, there is no compelling reason for implementing processes and structures of shared governance in a profit-making corporation such as the University of Phoenix that markets vocationally-oriented credentials and offers simplified and centrally-planned, "lowest common denominator" curriculum materials capable of being "taught" in multiple locations by inexperienced, part-time employees. The "trustees" and "administration" are happy with their profits, the "faculty" pleased with earning additional income without having to design their own classes, and the "students" satisfied with earning degrees "quickly and with as little resistance as possible" (Farrell, 2003). Faculty are transmitters of training material, not autonomous scholars; students are consumers purchasing products, not learners being educated. In such institutions, corporate structures and processes may not only be acceptable but in fact may improve both efficiency and effectiveness.

In contrast, academic institutions are those that give priority to education as an end in itself, and are deeply rooted in a culture that prizes academic freedom, critical discourse, creativity, and liberal learning. Their normative institutional nature is illustrated by Clark Kerr's (1970, p. 116) reference to the university as "a church with a religion. It believes in the unfettered search for truth, in free expression of opinion without fear, in preservation of the past, including books however offensive they may be currently, and in access on merit and the granting of grace on merit. Its principles are more important than service, or rules, or votes, or consumer preference. It is the keeper of the good, the true, and the beautiful; of culture. It perpetuates a spirit of inquiry and integrity. Its religion is not subject to

compromise." These are not market concepts but core values that are antithetical to the market (Ikenberry, 2001).

The academic vs. market tension in higher education, in which academic institutions are compared to businesses, is not a new one. The arguments were the same about a hundred years when Andrew S. Draper, president of the University of Illinois, opined that "the university cannot become a business corporation, with a business corporation's ordinary implications. Such a corporation is without what is being called spiritual aim, is without moral methods. Universities are to unlock the truth and turn out the best and the greatest men and women.... A university cannot become such a [business] corporation without ceasing to be a university" (Draper, 1906, p. 36). Draper knew that proposals to change structure are at the same time proposals to change purpose and culture. And changing character and identity risks losing the core expertise, commitment to mission, and long-term perspective that gives the university its unique character (as well as what contemporary marketers would refer to as its "competitive advantage").

"Hard" and "Soft" governance

"Hard" (or "rational") governance refers to the structures, regulations, and systems of sanctions in an organization that define authority relationships, prescribe certain organizational processes and encourage compliance with enacted policies and procedures. "Soft" (or interactional) governance encompasses the systems of social connections and interactions in an organization that help to develop and maintain individual and group norms. Hard and soft governance are based on quite different conceptual foundations.

The theoretical underpinnings of hard governance are to be found in theories of rational choice. Rational actors are presumed to be "entirely forward looking, and entirely self-interested" (Blackburn, 1998, p. 29). Rational systems are based on calculations of costs and benefits, and are set in place to maximize the likelihood that certain desirable outcomes will occur in the future. Hard governance is forward-looking.

The theoretical foundations of soft governance are located in the concepts of how organizational cultures are created over time through the interaction of people, and the cognitive processes through which they come collectively to share perceptions and "make sense" of what they are doing. Soft governance is backward-looking. The essence of soft governance is embedded in the socialization and expectations of the participants; institutions justify their behaviors, participants their roles, and society its support, based on their consistency with processes, roles and missions established in the past.

Proposals to alter shared governance, such as those by AGB mentioned earlier, are predicated on a rationally-based claim of cause and effect – that changing governance structure, and in particular those aspects of structure that affect the participation of faculty, will improve institutional performance. The history of attempts to reform hard governance does not provide a great deal of support for that claim. Nevertheless, there are continual calls for the reform of hard governance despite the lack of evidence that such changes are consequential. This is due, in part, to the ideological belief that it should be consequential, and in part because such structural changes are, at least in theory, administratively feasible. Less attention is given to the normative issues of soft governance (Gumport, 2000a), in part because changes in hard governance often deny the importance of soft governance, and in part because no one knows how to do it.

While hard governance can channel and to some extent harness the power of soft governance so that they are mutually reinforcing, in and of itself it appears to have little influence. As Clark Kerr (1982, pp. 29, 30-31) reported, "I once thought that alternative modes of governance had substantial significance in American higher education.... I would now advance the conclusion that, within the range of alternatives considered in the United States, forms of governance make some difference but not as much as often supposed.... [G]iven the heavy emphasis on individually made decisions by faculty members and the active competition among institutions, one specific arrangement in government versus another has minor implications for what actually happens in a university."

Hard governance makes little difference because most of the important decisions made in the university occur outside the formal system. As Cohen and March (1974, p. 33) have it, "each individual in the university is seen as making autonomous decisions. Teachers decide if, and when, and what to teach. Students decide if, when, and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when, and what to support.... The "decisions" of the system are a consequence produced by the system but intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one." Of course, it is precisely this lack of control that hard governance reformers seek to change, despite the generally accepted belief that it has produced a system of higher education of unequaled quality and diversity. Ironically, it is usually those most philosophically supportive of a market economy who are among the first to suggest the need to rationalize systems when they don't care for what the market has produced.

Looking back on the failed governance innovations of the turbulent 1970's, Kerr (1982, p. 31) remarked "changes in formal governance have generally made little difference and, when they did, mostly for the worse. All that effort, all that passion, all that turmoil was mostly for naught...." More

recent attempts to change governance through the creation of such new structures as joint big decision committees (Yamada, 1991) seem to have met the same fate, as have numerous attempts over the last 50 years to impose on academic institutions rational management systems that, by altering decision making processes, were also disguised attempts to change governance structures (Birnbaum, 2000). Hard governance proposals almost always sound reasonable and self-evident. But when they conflict with soft governance, they inevitably fail. Soft governance rules!

Isomorphism of governance and institutional type

It was suggested earlier that shared governance may be important to the proper performance of an academic institution, but may be counter productive in a market one. Governance may therefore be isomorphic with program. If so, attempts to change one will also change the other. If institutions become less academic, governance is less likely to be shared, and as governance is less shared institutions are likely to become less academic. As the faculty role is diminished, declining trust in faculty leads to increasing interest in rational management (Gumport, 2000a); in the same way, implementing new management techniques may further reduce trust in faculty. The change from an academic to a market institution may be neither immediate nor direct -- the loosely coupled properties of institutions will prevent that -- but over time it is likely to occur; we have already seen that "academic planning, budgeting, and day-to-day administration is becoming more like the management processes developed for the private sector and increasingly reflects values that conflict with the traditional values of university governance" (Waugh, 2003, p. 85). Proposals to alter the management or governance systems of universities are really disguised (and sometimes not so disguised) attempts to make academic

institutions into something else, so that the institutions lose "moral legitimacy, core purposes, and values such that it is no longer recognizable and identified as the entity it was supposed to be (Gumport, 2000b, p. 85).

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROPOSED GOVERNANCE CHANGES

All governance systems must deal with two issues: making good decisions, and getting those subject to those systems to accept the decisions as legitimate. People in general, and academics in particular, do not automatically accept the decisions of authorities. Boards of trustees, if they wished, could impose the governance recommendations of AGB on their institutions. Their legal right to do so is unquestioned and, although the Joint Statement recommends that boards undertake appropriate self-limitation, it recognizes them as the institution's final legal authority. Yet there are several reasons to believe that any unilateral actions to change the faculty role in shared governance would not be accepted, regardless of the nature of the faculty role it would establish, or the effects on the institution it promised to create. Aside from issues of academic freedom that faculty subject to these changes would almost surely raise, such actions would violate principles of procedural justice, diminish faculty status, and reduce institutional social capital. As a consequence, levels of trust and cooperation would diminish, processes of social regulation would be compromised, and institutional viability as an academic (as opposed to market) entity would be threatened.

### Procedural justice

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes through which organizational decisions are made. Fair processes may be desirable in all organizations, but they are of particular importance in normative organizations, such as colleges and universities, in which goals are unclear and the consequences of decisions are not easily assessed. Unable to obtain reliable feedback on decision outcomes, participants in these "process cultures" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) instead focus their attention on how things are done. Decisions that are made "in the right way," are more likely to be considered legitimate, and perceived legitimacy in turn makes voluntary compliance with social regulations more likely.

Social psychologists have studied several alternatives to the principle of procedural justice that have been posited to explain why people are liable to accept the regulations of authorities as legitimate and therefore are likely to voluntarily comply. Social exchange theories assume that people will accept decisions in a calculative way in order to maximize their outcomes. Distributive justice theories also emphasize outcomes, but focus on the fairness with which resources are distributed and the degree to which personal benefits are appropriate. Procedural justice theories also emphasize fairness, but instead of looking at outcomes the judgment is made based on the degree to which the procedures used to reach the directives are consistent with the values of the group (Lind & Tyler, 1988, p. 222). After comparing these three principles, Tyler and Lind (1992, p. 163) conclude:

> In study after study, our research and that of other psychologists has shown that the favorability of a decision or even the fairness of the decision plays only a minor role in determining legitimacy. Much more important, it appears, are judgments of the fairness of the procedures. And judgments of procedural fairness are based, in turn, on process-based inferences about

one's relationship with the authority. The belief that the authority views one as full member of society, trust in the authority's ethicality and benevolence, and belief in the authority's neutrality – these appear to be the crucial factors that lead to voluntary compliance with the directives of authority.

Although much of the work done on procedural justice has been based on legal settings, it has been proposed (Lind & Tyler, 1988) that these processes operate in all societal settings. Procedural fairness is considered to be an antecedent to cooperative group behavior which, in turn makes groups more efficient and effective (Tyler & Blader, 2000).

"Fairness" of procedure has no objective criteria - it is what the members of the group believe it to be. Agreement on "fairness" comes from the processes of socialization through which group members come to share values and beliefs; new members of the group learn these values from the older members (Tyler, 1990, p. 176). Students of governance have long recognized the value of fairness as an academic value, suggesting that good governance is based on "open plans, open policy statements, open findings, open reasons, open precedents, and fair informal and formal procedures" (Mortimer & Caruso, 1984). Any change in the faculty role in shared governance that is made without itself following the procedures of shared governance accepted by the faculty is likely to be considered procedurally unfair and therefore unacceptable

Governance and status

In Leadership and Ambiguity, Cohen and March (1974, p. 121) proposed the simple hypothesis that "most people in a college are most of the time less concerned with the content of a decision than

they are with eliciting an acknowledgment of their importance within the community. We believe that some substantial elements of the governance of universities can be better understood in terms of such a hypothesis than in terms of an assumption that governance is primarily concerned with the outcomes of decisions."

The structures and processes of shared governance identify the rights of the faculty to participate in the making of important decisions, and therefore certify their status and importance. People are concerned about their status in groups because high status within a valued group validates their own self-identity (Tyler & Lind, 1992). The importance of status in academic institutions can be gauged with a small thought-experiment; faced with a choice between a promotion in rank with no salary increase, or a salary increase with no promotion, what proportion of faculty would choose the former over the latter?

Status, while important in its own right, is reinforced through its relationship to procedural justice because being treated fairly is, itself, a recognition of status. "To the extent that a procedure is seen as indicating a positive, full-status relationship, it is judged to be fair, and to the extent that a procedure appears to imply that one's relationship with the authority or institution is negative or that one occupies a low-status position, the procedure is viewed as unfair" (Tyler & Lind, 1992, p. 140). Perceptions of self-worth and perceptions of fairness are related; when one feels valued, one is also more likely to believe that the group is functioning effectively and fairly.

Governance and social capital

Reducing the faculty role in shared governance is likely also to inhibit the development of social

networks and thereby reduce social capital. Academic institutions are rich in human capital because faculty and administrators are highly educated, At the same time, faculty autonomy, loose-coupling, and the anarchical nature of academic institutions often means that colleges and universities are impoverished in terms of social capital. By increasing participation in governance activities, providing a sense of influence, and creating mixed senates, joint-task forces and other forums for interaction, shared governance is a means by which social capital may be created. In the same way, reducing opportunities for shared governance may also reduce social capital within an institution. Social capital is important because it leads to trust and cooperation; a reduction of social capital not only weakens the influence of constituents within an organization, but also reduces the effective influence of their leaders.

Social capital creates value by increasing the productivity of people in groups. According to Putnam (2000, p. 19) in Bowling Alone, "social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them... [C]ivic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital." (p. 19). Putnam supports his argument with a mass of data showing the relationship between indices of social capital and other desirable social outcomes. Among the reasons for these outcomes is that networks sustain rules of conduct and expectations of reciprocity that lead to trust, and a trustful society is more efficient than a distrustful one. Social capital makes it easier for constituents of a group to resolve collective problems, and the development of social networks provides the institutional means to encourage socially desirable behavior.

Trust between authorities and constituents can be developed when each believes that the other will

act in a predictable way, and that each is concerned with, and is able to act in the interests of, the other. Trust strengthens the legitimacy of leaders, and creates mutually-reinforcing bonds of identity, confidence and support between them. One of the main organizational consequences of trust is the willingness of constituents to voluntarily comply with the directives of authorities without the need for the offering of rewards or the threat of punishment (Tyler 1998). Trust is therefore an essential component of democratic governance that leads to compliance and cooperation with the group without inducing alienation. Trust in an authority can be based on the ability of the authority to successfully compete for and allocate resources (exchange trust, which is forward-looking), or it can be based on the ability to predict the authority's behavior because of social connectedness leading to shared norms and shared social identity (communal trust, which is backward looking) (Braithwaite, 1998). One consequence of communal (or social) trust is that it leads constituents to identify with the authority, and to draw their identity from their work (Tyler, 1998). Communal trust depends on identification with the group and perceived agreement on common norms. Social trust is particularly important "within existing groups, in which social bonds are in place and people have already internalized group values" (Tyler, 1998, p. 287). If organizations which rely heavily on communal trust begin to give increased attention to exchange trust norms it may undermine the effectiveness of communal trust (Braithwaite, 1998).

Governing alone is like bowling alone - regardless of how wise or virtuous the person or office that determines what the "rules" should be, social capital within the group may not be increased and, in fact, is likely to be diminished as it transforms a process of reciprocal social interaction into an exercise in unilateral decision making. It is the process of shared governance, and not the outcomes, that helps to build the dense network of connections that creates social capital.

## CONCLUSIONS

A number of generalizations can be drawn from the preceding concepts related to procedural justice, status, social capital and social regulation. First, decisions made in social systems are more likely to be accepted when the procedures creating them are seen as legitimate and "fair." "Fairness" is related to the expectations of people involved in the process, who learn them through processes of socialization. Second, when structures and processes are developed so as to be consistent with existing social norms, people are more likely to defer to their moral authority. Procedures or sanctions seen as illegitimate not only may lead to non-compliance, but can also create disrespect for the system that created them. Additional procedures, also seen as illegitimate, may be created to respond to non-compliance, thus reducing even further the influence of authorities. Third, changes in social systems are more likely to be accepted when they do not challenge the social status of participants in that system, and are less likely to be accepted when they do. Fourth, systems that provide forums in which people can interact on matters related to their group norms and personal values help to create dense networks of interaction that increase social capital within the system . Higher levels of social capital, in turn, lead to increased trust and cooperation which are related to organizational effectiveness. Fifth, informal social controls may be more effective than formal legal controls in influencing social compliance with

organizational values. The strength of these informal controls will decline as the frequency of interaction within organizations decrease. Sixth, attempts to design utilitarian systems to increase organizational effectiveness may instead reduce effectiveness because they are inconsistent with participants' sense of what is proper. In summary, normative, backward-looking processes may be more likely than utilitarian, forward-looking processes to support compliance in social systems, and they do this by increasing social capital and trust. The consequence is that rational processes meant to achieve specific outcomes in normative institutions are likely to be less effective than normative processes that are consistent with social norms and moral principles approved by the community. Utilitarian decisions may create rules, sanctions and incentives , but since they are often not developed through legitimate processes, and are often narrowly focused and difficult to enforce, they may decrease confidence in the system and increase alienation. The irony, as Robinson & Darley (1997) point out, is that while utilitarian approaches may appear to have some short-term benefits, normative approaches based on the values of social groups often turn out to be the most utilitarian

Applying these ideas to academic institutions suggests that since shared governance is a generally accepted normative principle, attempting to alter it by reducing the role of faculty is likely to have a number of predictable, and negative, consequences. Faculty expect to play the preeminent role in issues related to the educational program, and to have their voices heard on other important institutional matters including those of governance itself. These expectations are inculcated during their professional socialization, reinforced by institutional history and academic tradition, articulated by respected leaders who reiterate the principle that the faculty must be involved in "developing and enforcing all the rules that protect academic values" (Bok, 2003, p. B9), and legitimated in authoritative documents such as the

Joint Statement. Attempts to unilaterally alter the faculty's role will be seen as an attack on faculty status and will be considered illegitimate; shared norms will no longer provide a guide to behavior.

A further consequence is that the institution is likely to make less effective decisions. The three main parties to academic governance focus their attention on different things: trustees are concerned with responsiveness, administration with efficiency, and faculty with academic values. Each group has been socialized in different ways, is exposed to different aspects of the environment, has competence and expertise in different areas, and "sees" the institution from unique perspectives. Effective governance requires that all these perspectives be considered in making decisions. In the words of W. H. Cowley, "academic governance is far too important to be left entirely in the hands of professors or entirely in the hands of boards of trustees. The enterprise requires the participation of both...." (Wicke, 1963, p. 65).

In terms of the faculty role, "shared governance" is just another way of saying that those with expertise in an institution's core technology should have some important role in governing it. When that is not the case, "levels of satisfaction are likely to be low, the system may become too simple for its environment, problems are not properly attended to, and the institution may appear to lurch from crisis to crisis.... Governance systems that are not accepted by the parties lead almost inexorably to disruptive conflict" (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 39).

For all these reasons, changes in hard governance are unlikely to have the outcomes claimed for them. The configuration of hard governance itself, as long as it is accepted as legitimate by the participants, makes little difference because "governance guidelines in themselves have no animating power. In its most authentic sense, governance is simply the process by which people pursue common ends and, in the process, breathe life into otherwise lifeless forms. The best measure of the health of

the governance structure at a college is not how it looks on paper, but the climate in which it functions" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982, p. 88). It is the climate of "soft governance" that encourages trust, which makes it more likely that constituents will be influenced by institutional norms and values without requiring formal rules and processes. Interaction and reciprocity build up the dense social networks that lead to trust between participants and to confidence in both the processes and the outcomes of the governance system (Del Favero, 2003). The best governance is invisible. Whenever an institution spends inordinate time and energy on issues of governance, whenever it must rely on hard governance to work, it is almost certainly a sign that an institution is not operating well.

## THE END OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

The end of governance can only be to support the purposes of the institution which has created it. For market institutions, the purpose can be identified in terms of profit or some other quantifiable economic metric, and rational, forward-looking governance structures and processes may be quite effective. For academic institutions, however, the purpose is much less clear. These institutions are not concerned with profit, but with performance of mission; because that mission cannot be clearly articulated, the means to achieve it is always a matter of contention rather than certainty. These institutions may find the justification both for their mission, and for the governance systems that support it, by looking backward. "The university," said Emerson (1856, p. 882) "must be retrospective. The gale that gives direction to the vanes on all its towers blows out of antiquity."

The purpose of academic institutions is not to create products but to embody ideas. Academic governance cannot be rationalized for the same reason that it is not possible to rationalize the purposes for which academic institutions exist. What kind of governance system can support academic institutions if their task is "the creation of the future" (Whitehead, 1938, p. 233), if their aims are "wisdom and goodness" (Hutchins, 1943, pp. 23-24), if it is (in Lord Haldane's words) "in universities that...the soul of a people mirrors itself" (Flexner, 1930, p. 186), if their purpose is, as John Stuart Mill had it, the "laying open to each succeeding generation...the accumulated treasure of the thoughts of mankind" (Garforth, 1971), if they are "the best and most benign side of our society insofar as that society aims to cherish the human mind" (Hofstadter, 1979, p. 38), if they are to provide "a constant conversation...between past and present, a conversation the culture has with itself, on behalf of the country... making the world, for all its pain, work" (Giamatti, 1988, pp. 24-5), and if their "ultimate business... is human freedom" (Bailey, 1976, p. 76)?

Abbott Lawrence Lowell (1934, pp. 290-291), the president of Harvard, provided in 1920 one backward-looking answer:

> [T]he respective functions of the faculties and the governing boards -- those things that each had better undertake, those it had better leave to the other, and those which require mutual concession -- are best learned from experience and best embodied in tradition. Tradition has great advantages over regulations. It is a more delicate instrument; it accommodates itself to things that are not susceptible of sharp definition; it is more flexible in its application, making exceptions and allowances which it would be difficult to foresee or prescribe. It is also more stable. Regulations can be amended; tradition cannot, for it is not made, but grows, and can be

> altered only by a gradual change in general opinion, not by a majority vote. In short, it cannot be amended, but only outgrown.

Lowell recognized that the governance of an academic institution is organic, not mechanical. It is not designed as much as it evolves because it uniquely supports the activities of a social institution whose processes and goals cannot be clearly defined, whose outcomes cannot be precisely measured, but whose critical importance to society is indisputable. Proposals to improve governance by clarifying roles are as problematic as suggestions that institutions can become more effective by specifying outcomes. Both are likely to lead to increased bureaucratization, administrative influence, and the selection of data based on availability rather than on importance. Both are likely to strengthen hard governance at the expense of soft governance.

Governance is a means to an end. Therefore, the best forms of governance are those that evolve because they are most fit for a specific end. The calls for governance reforms that are more flexible and permit rapid decision making are rooted in classic notions of rationality and rational choice. The proponents of governance reform commonly take a forward-looking, utilitarian approach. Their arguments, however, are often based on ideology. They "do not only or so much analyse reality but prescribe an ideal of 'good governance" (Enders, 2002, p. 80). It is relatively easy to understand what they are against, but much more difficult to comprehend what they really want, and the system itself is so complex that the consequences of their recommendations cannot be predicted .

It is certain that while academic institutions that remain true to their traditions to some extent will be responsive to contemporary pressures for economic or political "relevance" in the future as they have been in the past. However they will not be as responsive as their critics demand. The fact that academic

institutions cannot be expected to do everything is not necessarily bad. As Abraham Flexner (1930, p. 27) pointed out, "universities that are held to their appropriate tasks will be unfit to do other things." Other institutions will be created to do what academic institutions should not. The competition of these new educational entities for resources should not be viewed as a threat, but as an opportunity for academic institutions to relieve themselves of programs and clienteles that are inappropriate to their purpose.

Advocates for reform may argue that "faculty no longer can shut themselves off from the rest of society as the commonly accepted notion of the ivory tower once implied" (Del Favero, 2003, p. 918). But it is difficult to argue that, even when stressing its commitment to intellectual and personal development, academic institutions have ever been separated from the needs and interests of society, although there are disagreements about what those interests may be. Ivory towers have their place, and there are elements in the higher education that cannot – and should not -- be thought of as purely driven by society's manifest interests. After all, as Nisbet (1971, p. 208) has argued,

> What, in a civilized society, could possibly be wrong with, or stagnant, archaic, or antiquarian about, the vision of an enclave in the social order whose principal purpose is working creatively and critically with ideas through scholarship and teaching? Is not man's highest evolutionary trait thus far precisely his capacity for dealing with ideas: learnedly, imaginatively, and critically? Is there any more promising hallmark for a civilized society than its willingness to support a class of persons whose principal business is to think, to arrive at knowledge, and to induct others in this principal business?

There is no crisis of governance among those institutions that emphasize academic as opposed to

corporate values. Claims that such institutions are risking disruption or failure because they cannot respond quickly enough to a changing environment are both inaccurate and misplaced. It should not be surprising that such institutions are more stable and resistant to change than other kinds of organizations - indeed, that is what makes them institutions. And the older and more successful they are, the more difficult the change. Because of the uncertainty of their technologies, universities have evolved so that their core activities are only loosely coupled to both their formal structure and their environment. One consequence is that they are less responsive to both administrative and political influence; the tradeoff is that their core technologies can continue without disruption. The principles of shared governance enunciated in the 1967 Joint Statement continue to serve these institutions, and the larger society, well.

The crucial contemporary issue of governance, as Steck (2003, p. 81) has pointed out, is to reclaim the traditional roles of academic institutions. "The core values and mission of the university must be sustained if the university is to fulfill its traditional role of learning, scholarship, and service. A fully corporatized university is only the shell of a university, and the task facing the academic community is to ensure that the inner core as well as the outer shell are preserved." This preservation will require that potential reform efforts "reflect upon histories as well as futures" (Gumport, 2000b, p. 87).

There is no doubt that, as its critics suggest, faculty participation in shared governance will have the effect of making it more difficult to change the programs and purposes of higher education. Whether this is a good thing or bad thing is a matter of ideology. The faculty are the primary upholders of the academic culture, and so those that give precedence to the idea of a university as an academic institution -- who believe with Masefield that "there are few earthly things more splendid than a university" -- are likely also to continue to believe in the importance of shared governance. The basic question to ask is

not whether we want to make governance more efficient, but whether we want to preserve truly academic institutions. If the answer is affirmative, then shared governance is an essential precondition.

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